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Reports / Publications

Partnerships

Racial & Ethnic Minority Populations

Training Opportunities

CAMICC

SEARCH OMH Web site

Diversity in Action Framework for CDC/ATSDR

"Diversity is appreciation and respect for differences in people ."

I. Introduction

A. Charge

On January 9, 2001, Dr. Jeffrey P. Koplan, Director of CDC and Administrator of ATSDR, convened a diversity work group composed of representatives from various CIOs, sanctioned employee groups, and recognized labor union.

The work group served to assist Dr. Koplan:

- To provide a framework that will assist CDC/ATSDR to attract and retain a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the populations that we serve.

- To aid in the development of and to sustain a multi-culturally sensitive workplace environment that values and respects diversity.

B. The Face of CDC/ATSDR

The Federal Government is changing. Like other organizations, we are experiencing the impact of the knowledge-based society and economy, dramatic advances in technology, increased emphasis on results, and rising expectations of our customers. The Federal workforce is also changing, demanding more opportunities and advancement for learning, becoming more diverse, and expecting more flexibility and support in the workplace.

CDC and ATSDR are mission-driven agencies dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for all people. We serve diverse populations through the recruitment of a diverse workforce into all occupations and at all levels of the organizations in order to reflect the populations we serve.

As of December 2000, CDC and ATSDR's work force are significantly below the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) national average for representation of American Indians and Hispanics in all of the CIO's. With Hispanics being so severely under-represented here at CDC/ATSDR, Dr. Koplan and the diversity work group have endorsed the Hispanic Agenda for Action Recruitment Plan for use by the CIOs to enhance Hispanic representation (see attachment).

Asian/Pacific Islanders are also under-represented in many CIO's. CDC and ATSDR have made progress regarding the representation of women and minorities in its workforce, however, our workforce data also indicates that all minority populations are under-represented in most positions at the grades 13-15 levels. There is more to do to increase representation of individual minority groups, women and people with disabilities.

Currently there is no mechanism for measuring our accomplishments in

hiring and promoting persons based on their sexual orientation and/or religion. An employees' sexual orientation or religion should not be a barrier to equal opportunity.
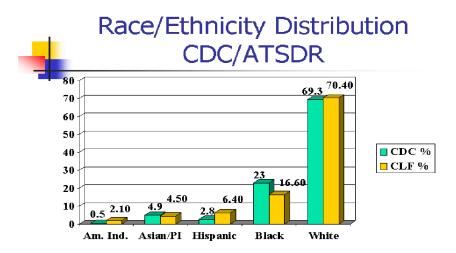
Race/Ethnicity Distribution CDC/ATSDR

Chart Data 12/2000 - Workforce Information Zone (WIZ) HRMO

In calendar year 2000, CDC/ATSDR hired a total of 1020 employees while losing 505 for a net gain of 515 employees. There were significant increases overall in the representation of Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, American Indians, and Alaska Natives, resulting in a gain of 56 Asian/ Pacific Islanders, 30 Hispanics, and three American Indians. Traditionally, these groups have been severely under-represented at CDC/ATSDR. Although, there were significant gains with these groups, the overall percentages of each group remained unchanged due to the growth of the overall CDC and ATSDR workforce.

II. Workplace Environment

Both CDC and ATSDR have adopted core values that are designed to promote and sustain an environment that respects diversity; maximizes every employee's potential; and creates a workplace that is free of discrimination. CDC and ATSDR core values are: Accountability, Respect and Integrity. The core values explicitly state "We are committed to achieving a diverse workforce at all levels of the organization." CDC and ATSDR are also committed to managing diversity principles in interaction with contacts in their external environments. Employees continue to learn about diversity and are encouraged to be ever conscious of modeling appropriate workplace behaviors.

By increasing the diversity of their workforce, the areas where CDC and ATSDR expect to see benefits from their efforts include the following:

- Increase employees' respect for diversity

- Enhance CDC's reputation as an employer who embraces diversity

- Strengthen CDC's accountability

- Enhancement of productivity

- Keeping pace with technologic change

- Expanded options for problem-solving

- Improved communication at all levels

- Maximized effectiveness of their operations

- Utilize our human resources more effectively

III. Diverse Workforce

This section highlights examples of recruitment resources and best practices to assist CDC/CIOs and ATSDR in their efforts to achieve a diverse workforce.

A. Recruitment Resources

1. Employee referral (word-of-mouth) - An analysis of recruitment sources conducted in 1997, revealed that 55 percent of employees hired at CDC learned about their jobs from other employees. A new analysis is being conducted and should be completed by September 2001. Current recruitment literature supports employee referral as being the most effective recruiting source in private sector organizations and other Federal agencies.

2. Internet Web Sites - In addition to posting vacancies and advertisements in printed media, Internet web sites have become one of the fastest growing mediums for reaching applicants.

3. Resumix - This is an automated applicant database which centralizes the storage and retrieval of job applications, including resumes and curricula vitae. HRMO and other CIO recruiters store solicited applications from job and career fairs, conferences, etc. in this system. Centers can query the Resumix applicant supply file through their servicing generalist. If a potential applicant is identified, the Center could name request the applicant thereby minimizing the time it would normally take for announcing positions.

4. Internship/Fellowship Programs - Generally a temporary assignment which introduces the individual to CDC, ATSDR, and Federal service. Several CDC Fellowship programs offered (e.g., CDC Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program, The Public Health Prevention Specialist Program, The Epidemic Intelligence service Program, the Prevention Effectiveness Fellowship Program) provide an excellent training and service opportunity to qualified individuals. Diversity efforts are a key component of the recruitment strategies for these programs, which as a result, are an excellent means of hiring individuals with unique skills, experiences and backgrounds into the CDC/ATSDR workforce.

5. Recruitment Events (Job Fairs)
HRMO will continue to partner with the CIOs to ensure that diversity planning efforts are met while also addressing the recruitment needs of the programs. This

can be accomplished through the continued coordination of program staff and HRMO staff to high-profile recruitment events.

6. Non-competitive Appointments - Allows CDC and ATSDR to appoint an individual without requiring open competition from the general public.

B. Best Practices

1. Establish positions at the lowest applicable grade level for "hard-to-fill" occupations, such as behavioral scientist, epidemiologist, computer specialists, etc. Recruits normally stay longer.

2. Utilize student programs, such as Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), Outstanding Scholar, Bilingual/Bicultural Program, Presidential Management Intern (PMI), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), etc. These appointments can serve as an assessment period for the employer and student in considering permanent employment.

3.
Work with CDC sponsored professional public health training programs (e.g., Education Research Centers, Training Project Grants, Urban Research Center, and Prevention Research centers to reach more diverse graduate populations, from whom CDC can recruit. Give CDC talks and promote use of the CDC high school epidemiology course (EXCITE) at high schools with high proportions of under represented populations to increase diversity for public health and CDC.

4. Utilize the Program for Persons with Disabilities. These are non-competitive appointments that afford the ability to hire on the spot.

5. Utilize Excepted Service Appointments under Title 42.

6. Network with minority communities

7. Recruit at colleges with large minority populations such as Tribal Colleges/Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), etc.

8. Use a variety of outreach techniques, i.e., advertise in publications that reach targeted populations; use of Internet web sites that are appropriate for diversity recruitment.

9. Coordinate recruitment at various professional meetings with HRMO, other CIO's and vice versa. Strengthen communication between HRMO and the CIOs through the sharing of information about successful diversity efforts. Enlist the CIOs to share their success stories at CIO staff meetings, CDC Senior staff meetings, and ADMO meetings.

10. Use special pay incentives such as recruitment, retention, and relocation bonuses.

11. Utilize CDC/ATSDR Hispanic Recruitment and Retention Plan and other groups as they become available.

C. Who to send - The optimal arrangement is to send representatives from HRMO that have knowledge of the organizational component and a representative from the component that has in depth knowledge of the position. Additionally, representatives need to be culturally competent.

D. Develop and distribute culturally and linguistically appropriate materials to targeted audiences.

E. Establish recruitment plans for each CIO. Recruitment planning facilitates meeting staffing needs by addressing current issues, budgetary resources, changes in workforce, workforce competencies, and future workforce needs. These needs are then defined in terms of positions with the qualifications sufficient to ensure acceptable performance. Recruitment planning is used as a tool to determine employee shortages due to expansion, reductions, retirements and other losses.

F. Private and Federal sector recruitment incentives.

1. Establish an employee referral program. Word of mouth is the most effective recruitment source. Today's job market is the most competitive in 30 years. The enlistment of employees to aid in the recruiting process is a smart - if not essential - practice. Candidates hired through referrals stay longer and assimilate faster than those hired through other methods. An incentive to encourage employees to make these referrals, such as finder's fees or some other type of award system should be considered.

2. Utilize Benefits/Family-Friendly Programs: CDC and ATSDR offer many of these programs and they should be promoted when recruiting or when discussing employment with applicants. They are: Sick/Annual Leave, Life Insurance, Thrift Savings Plan, Alternative Work Schedules, Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, Sick Leave for Adoption, Leave for Bone Marrow/Organ Donor, Lactation Support Program, Part-Time Employment, Telecommuting, Family Leave, Dependent Care Support Program, Employee Assistance Program.

IV. Retention and Career Development

A. **Develop and Implement Cultural Competency and Respect -** Address cultural competency activities / issues that are responsive to the needs of diverse groups; promote cultural and linguistic awareness in areas of health care services, public health, and social services; disseminate information in languages other then English (publications, internet and other media) employment of bilingual / bicultural staff; provide funding for cultural competency initiatives.

B. **Mentoring -** CDC and ATSDR have a Mentoring program that was initiated in 1995 and is currently a key component in the Agency's commitment to career enhancement of all employees. It fosters cross-organizational communications and institutional knowledge and improves the mentored persons ability to do his/her job well. CDC and ATSDR currently mentor students through the work-site

experience program and encourages them to pursue higher education and employment opportunities in the Federal sector.

C. Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Retention:

1. Review Quality of Work Life Improvement Plan - This document has been developed as a result of all employees surveyed by HHS to gather a more in-depth perspective of employee satisfaction with the quality of work life initiatives. The data collected is used to develop new and improved initiatives (e.g. childe and elder care, prenatal planning, adoption, education, flexible workplace, alternative work schedules, voluntary leave transfer program, online access to agency policies, programs, job announcements, training opportunities).

2. Conduct Exit Interviews - The basis of what is learned during exit interviews should ideally be used to fix internal problems, curb turnover, and ultimately increase the retention of a diverse employee base.

D. Build career ladders - Career ladders offer an opportunity to retain employees at the lower grade levels who possess the potential to grow in the job and develop the necessary skills to perform at higher grade levels.

E. Training

1. Diversity training - Recommended annually for all employees.

2. Diversity training for supervisors and managers designed toward a greater understanding and awareness of the need as well as mechanisms, and strategies to selecting a diverse workforce.

3. Job-related training and cross-training.

F. Awards and employee recognition - The systems that reward and engage employees are key to maintaining a diverse, high-quality workforce. Use public awards to recognize significant contributions.

G. Best Practices

1. Supervisors and employees should establish positive relationships. Examples of means to achieving this goal include: regular meetings to discuss organizational vision, mission, and goals; supervisors providing regular feedback on work performance; supporting quality of work life (QWL) initiatives that advance the interests of a diverse work force, such as alternative work schedules, family-friendly leave policies, Employee Assistance program, benefits, etc.

2. Employees should be given the opportunity to make work-related decisions.

3. Supervisors should provide employees the support to improve skills. Examples of means to achieving this goal include: joint development of Individual Development Plan (IDP) that identifies individual goals for employees growth in the context of the organizational mission. The plan should include activities to develop competencies needed to meet IDP goals; supporting employee attendance at seminars, conferences, and other training opportunities; supporting requests for job-sharing or cross-training, where appropriate.

4. Supervisors should show support for diversity, such as supporting employee attendance at agency-sponsored diversity activities and participation in employee networking groups, such as ALECA, BIG, GLOBE, Asian-Pacific-American Task Force, American Indian/Alaska Native Coalition, etc.

5. Supervisors should reward employees for applying skills to get the results the employer desires. Examples of means to achieve this goal include: Establishment of an annual, formal employee award and recognition program at the organizational or CIO level; utilization of existing means of awards, both monetary- such as on-the-spot cash awards-and non-monetary -such as time-off awards and certificates of appreciation.

6. Supervisors should be encouraged to use Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to reduce complaints and grievances.

V. Setting Goals and Tracking Successes

This section highlights examples of setting goals and tracking success to assist CDC/CIO's and ATSDR in their efforts to achieve and maintain a diverse workforce.

Each organizational component should:

1. Examine its own data as compared to civilian labor force to set recruitment and retention goals to reach parity. (Parity means workforce representation of under represented groups that are equivalent to the civilian labor force.)

2. Set up quality of work life reviews to assess work place environment.

3. Review and implement the Hispanic Recruitment and Retention Plan and other diversity plans as initiated.

4. CIO Director participate in a quarterly one-on-one with CDC Director to review diversity statistics.

5. Convene annual senior staff meeting to discuss progress and successes.

6. At a minimum, collect and report the following key data points to the CDC Director:

   a. Number of current (baseline) employees by race, ethnicity, grade, disability, and gender

   b. Number of outreach opportunities (i.e. recruitment activities)

   c. Number of new hires by race, ethnicity, grade, disability, and gender

   d. Number of promotions by race, ethnicity, grade, disability, and gender

   e. Number of employees trained in diversity

   f. Attrition rates by race, ethnicity, grade, disability and gender

NOTE: Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring managers to make selections on the basis of race, national origin, gender, or any other characteristic prohibited from discriminatory consideration by the equal employment laws. Rather, it is anticipated that a commitment to recruiting from a diverse applicant pool, valuing diversity of background and experience, and identifying and addressing barriers to advancement and retention will result in the desired diversity at all levels of the workforce.

VI. References

A. Hispanic Recruitment and Retention Plan

B. **Internet-based References**

Human Resources Management Office

Human Resources Management Office

Human Resources Management Office
http://www.cdc.gov/train.htm

Office of Minority Health
http://www.omhrc.gov

Office of Equal Employment Opportunity

Office of Personnel Management
http://www.opm.gov

The Secretary's Hispanic Initiative Hispanic Agenda for Action: Improving Services to Hispanic Americans
http://www.omhrc.gov/haa/HAA2pg/AboutHAA1.htm - Procurement

US Government Printing Office
http://www.access.gpo.gov

National Association of Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
http://www.nafeo.org

American Indian Higher Education Consortium
http://www.aihec.org

Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools
http://www.hshps.com

VII. Acknowledgements

Committee participants included representatives from the following CDC/CIOs and ATSDR employee organizations:

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Office of Minority Health (OMH)

Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (OEEO)

Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

Human Resources Management Office (HRMO)

Office of the Director (OD)

Office of the General Counsel (OGC)

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)

American Federation of Government Employees 2883

American Indian/Alaska Native Coalition

Asian-Pacific-American Task Force

Association of Latino Employees of CDC/ATSDR (ALECA)

Blacks in Government (BIG)

Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Employees (GLOBE)

Hispanic Agenda for Action Recruitment Plan